National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Nan	ne				
historic For	rt Mitchell				
and or common	Fort Mit	chell Site			
2. Loca	ation				
street & number	r 1/4 mil	e east of Ala	bama Route 16	5	not for publication
city, town Pho	oenix City	_	vicinity of		
state A1al	bama	code 01	county	Russell	code 113
3. Clas	ssification	on			
Category district building(s) structure _X site object	Ownership _X_ public private both Public Acquis in process being cons	v v v y y y y	s ccupied noccupied rork in progress ssible es: restricted es: unrestricted	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum x park private residence religious scientific transportation other:
-	ner of Prussell County				
street & number		unty Courthou	se		
city, town Pho	oenix City		vicinity of	state A	labama
5. Loca	ation of	Legal D	escriptio	on	
courthouse, reg	istry of deeds, etc	. Russell Cou	nty Courthous	e	
street & number	, 14th Str	eet	,		
city, town	Phoenix			state	Alabama
6. Rep	resenta	tion in E	xisting S	Surveys	
title			has this pro	perty been determined elig	ible? yes no
date				federal state	county local
depository for s	urvey records				
city, town				state	

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair	deteriorated ruins _X unexposed	Check one unaltered altered	Check one X original site moved date	1813-1840
tair	unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

FORT MITCHELL

Site Type: Fort Mitchell consists of the archeological remains of two palisaded military forts (1813 and 1825), the Creek Trading House or Factory (1817-1820), the Creek Indian Agency (1821-1832), the Thomas Crowell Tavern (c. 1825), two historic cemeteries containing the graves of individuals who lived at Fort Mitchell, and the remains of the Federal Road (1811).

Environmental Setting: The two Fort Mitchells, and associated sites, are located on a prominent sandy knoll approximately three-quarters of a mile west of the Chattahoochee River in Russell County, Alabama. This area is located in the uplands above and west of the floodplain of the Chattahoochee River. This area, known as the Chunnenugge Hills, is made up of a series of sand hills which developed on the Blufftown and Ripley Formation in eastern Alabama.

The topography of the Fort Mitchell area is dominated by a chain of hills that form small plateaus with steep and eroded sides. Soils in the upland area are grouped under the Dothan-Fuquay-Wagram Association and are characteristically deep, well-drained, sandy loams. Within this region of Alabama the natural vegetation is dominated by oak-hickory-pine forest which includes bitternut, mockernut, and pignut hickories, white oak, northern and southern red oak, loblolly pine and shortleaf pine (Morgan 1983:3-4).

Historical Background: The Fort Mitchell area became the focus of United States and Creek Indian relationships due to its strategic position as one of the few good river crossings along the Chattahoochee River. All overland traffic from Georgia into Alabama, crossed the Chattahoochee at this point (Morgan 1983:10). This crossing, originally an Indian trading path, was approved in 1805 by Congress to be upgraded to a Federal Road, which was completed in 1811. The road began in Augusta, Georgia, ran through Fort Hawkins (Macon, Georgia), on to Fort Mitchell, and finally terminated at Pensacola, Florida (Chase 1974:28).

The movement of white settlers over the Federal Road and on to Creek lands resulted in increasing friction between the two groups. Creek leaders such as Tecumseh and William Weatherford (known as Red Eagle) secured military stores from the British, and their Spanish allies, in west Florida. The conflict, to stop settler encroachment, known as the First Creek Indian War lasted for nearly two years and ended with the defeat of the Creeks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, on March 26, 1814 (Caruso 1963:322).

During the First Creek Indian War, the first Fort Mitchell was constructed by the Georgia militia, in November of 1813, under the command of General John Floyd (Chase 1974:3; Morgan 1983:11). From this river crossing site, Floyd conducted two raids against the Creeks in eastern Alabama. In a letter dated

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December 18, 1813, from Floyd to General Andrew Jackson he described his campaigns and "...that he had established a strong stockade fort defended by blockhouses...on the west side of the Chathouchie (sic) (Chase 1974:3). Floyd named Fort Mitchell for the Governor of Georgia David Brydie Mitchell.

By February of 1814, the enlistments of the militia ran out and Floyd's command abandoned Fort Mitchell. Throughout the First Creek War, Fort Mitchell was never the scene of any major engagement, but remained a safe haven for units which functioned in eastern Alabama (Chase 1974:3-4; Morgan 1983:11).

The Treaty of Fort Jackson, ending the First Creek Indian War, required that the Creek "Indians were to be settled in an area delineated by Line Creek on the west and the Chattahoochee on the east" (Chase 1974:4). Because of Fort Mitchell's convenient position along the Federal Road, in the newly established Creek Territory, the abandoned fort site was selected as the location for the Indian Trading House or Factory in 1817 (Chase 1974:4).

The first and only government trader or factor at Fort Mitchell was Major Daniel Hughes. Hughes ran the factory from 1817 to 1820, but was finally forced to sell it to the Creeks, because he was unable to show a profit (Morgan 1983:11). The Indian Factory site is located just north of the 1813 Fort Mitchell site.

The government replaced the factor with an Indian Agent, in 1820. The first agent was Fort Mitchell's namesake and ex-governor of Georgia, David B. Mitchell. Mitchell was, however, forced to resign his office in March of 1821 (Morgan 1983:12). Colonel John Crowell became the second Creek Indian Agent, and remained in that position until the agency was closed in 1832 (Morgan 1983:12). Crowell established the Creek Indian Agency north of the Federal Road and just west of the 1813 Fort Mitchell. A short time later, John's brother, Thomas Crowell built a post office and tavern between the two (Chase 1974:4; Morgan 1983:12).

In 1825, the Crowell's entertained the Marquis de Lafayette, and his party during his tour of America. Lafayette's secretary, Lasseur Lavasseur, noted that there were "...a hundred Indian houses..." at Fort Mitchell, in addition to the agency and service buildings put up by the Crowell brothers. No mention of the 1813 Fort Mitchell is found during the time of Indian Factory (1817-1820), so it is now believed that the Creeks living there converted Floyd's palisade walls and blockhouses either into house posts or firewood, so that by 1825 no above ground remains of the first Fort Mitchell existed (Chase 1974:5).

Shortly, after the Lafayette party left the Fort Mitchell agency, the government regarrisoned the site, in response to an outbreak of violence between the Creeks over the Treaty of Indian Springs, which ceded all Creek lands in Georgia. In order to maintain peace, four companies of the 4th Infantry Regiment began construction of the second Fort Mitchell (Chase 1974:4; Morgan 1983:13).

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A visitor to Crowell's tavern in 1836, Jacob Rhett Mott, described the 1825 Fort Mitchell as "...a square formed by pickets 12 feet high with a blockhouse at diagonal corners" (Chase 1974:4-5). Prior to the archeological investigations at Fort Mitchell in 1971, it was widely believed that the 4th Infantry Regiment simply reconstructed Floyd's 1813 fort. In fact the archeological work showed that the second Fort Mitchell was smaller than, and built inside the remains of the 1813 fort (Chase 1974:4-5).

The Fort Mitchell constructed in 1825, was garrisoned by a variety of regular Army units, marines, state militias, and friendly Creeks, while it attempted to maintain peace between the Creeks and white settlers (Morgan 1983:15). Following the signing of the Treaty of Cusseta, which granted the Creeks' land in the west in return for all of their holdings east of the Mississippi River, in 1832, the Creek Indian Agency was closed, by the Jackson Administration (Morgan 1983:14-15). Fort Mitchell, then became the Headquarters of the Army of the South and the facility to hold the Indians prior to shipment west. Beginning in 1836 and continuing through 1838, the Creek Indian removal was completed (Morgan 1983:16).

After 1838, it became clear that Fort Mitchell had outlived it usefulness. It was abandoned by the military in 1840, and the property was sold to the former Creek Indian Agent John Crowell, who built a plantation some distance north of the Fort Mitchell area (Chase 1974:7; Morgan 1983:17). John Crowell, his family, and some of the soldiers and Indians who lived at Fort Mitchell are interred in the two cemeteries in the Fort Mitchell area.

Archeological Investigations: The first investigation of the Fort Mitchell area was by Mr. Peter A. Brannon, in 1915. As the Director of the Alabama State Archives and History Department, and a native of Russell County, he compiled an inventory of historic places in the area. He took the only photographs of surviving structures associated with Fort Mitchell, which shows several buildings surrounded by a split rail fence and identified as "The Indian Agency". No mention was made by Brannon of any remains of the Fort Mitchell structures of 1825, so we may assume that they are not extant by 1915 (Chase 1974:8).

The first archeological testing of the site began in the fall of 1957, when Mr. David W. Chase and Richard Larner uncovered a large trash pit along the slope of the Fort Mitchell area north of the fort site. The pit yielded early 19th century artifacts, such as English Staffordshire wares (pearl ware, blue feather edged, transfer printed, and underglazed painted wares). Also found were white kaolin pipe fragments, iron nails, glass bottle fragments, gunflints, and military buttons of the Fort Mitchell period 1813-1840 (Chase 1974:8).

The only major excavation of the site took place between July and August of 1971, under the direction of Mr. Chase, after the property had been acquired by Russell County. The excavations were to determine the integrity of the archeological remains of the fort in preparation for public interpretation of the site.

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Archeological operations began with the opening of a 70 foot long by five foot wide trench that uncovered the south palisade of the 1825 fort. In the palisade line were found the butt end remains of white pine logs. The logs were 9-10 inches in diameter. Also found were brick chimney remains from this fort (Chase 1974:9).

Expanding the excavation trench to the south, a second palisade line and outer defensive ditch line were uncovered from the 1813 Fort Mitchell. At this point the excavators realized there were two Fort Mitchells on the site, one inside the other (Chase 1974:9).

The crew uncovered the entire southwest bastion of the 1825 fort (See Figure 1). They found indications in the form of charred wooden remains that the bastion had burned. It had apparently served as a storehouse for military goods as numerous musket and pistol lead balls, gunflints and military buttons were found (Chase 1974:10-11). In addition, the excavation located and excavated the 1813 period magazine and portions of the 1813 northeast bastion (Chase 1974:12-13).

The 1813 magazine was located outside the east wall of the fort and measured twelve feet square, with sides constructed of heavy logs 8"-15" in diameter, and partially dug into the ground. Chase found artillery buttons, window glass, grape or cannister shot and lead musket, pistol and buckshot, which coupled with the architecture indicates its use as a magazine. It is believed that this magazine was constructed by the 1813 occupants for storage of powder and shot for their cannon and muskets. Later it collapsed and was used for a refuse dump for the 1825 occupants of the fort.

Overall, the excavations confirmed the general historical descriptions of both forts being palisaded and with two bastions, or blockhouses on diagonal corners. However, the excavations identified two distinct constructions for two different Fort Mitchells. The first fort (1813) was a large palisaded fort 250 feet in length on its east-west axis and 135 feet in width on its north-south axis. The bastions located at the northeast and southwest corners of the fort were made of stacked logs setting in slot trenches, rather than upright palisades. Around the entire fort was a outer defensive ditch extending twenty feet beyond the fort (Chase 1974:12-13).

The second Fort Mitchell was only 80 by 70 feet with no outer ditch. It was placed entirely within the older fort. The palisade and bastions were constructed entirely of upright pine logs. Structures inside the later fort were permanent wooden buildings with brick chimneys.

The artifacts found in this excavation mirrored those found in the 1957 testing of a trash pit. Including early 19th century English ceramics, Chase also found coins, trade silver ornaments, grape or cannister shot, iron spikes, military encounterments, lead shot for muskets and pistols, and Indian ceramics. The Indian pottery dated from 1817-1836 and was typed as Ocmulgee Fields, "...a plain, smooth ware - sometimes painted red; a brushed ware; and more rarely, an incised ware. All types related to either late 18th or early 19th centuries" (Chase 1974:9).

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Chase noted in his excavation report that to the south of the fort sites was a 'Y' shaped depression running eastward. This gulley and the fork which form the 'Y' are interpreted as being the trace of the original Federal Road which leads from the river past the fort with one branch turning north westward toward the west wall of the palisaded wall where the main gate of the 1825 fort was located. Chase and later work done by Morgan (1983) indicated the presence of the Indian Agency, Creek Indian Factory, and the Crowell Tavern north of the Federal Road and west of Fort Mitchell. No testing or excavation was conducted on these sites.

Fort Mitchell and its associated sites represent a time period (1813-1840) that is of great interest to both the historian and archeologist alike. The archeological remains pertaining to this period constitute an important source of information concerning this area and could contribute to our understanding of the social, political and economic relations between a young expansionist nation and a Native people seeking to retain their land and their way of life.

Site Integrity: Since the Fort Mitchell site was listed on the National Register in 1970, the Russell County government has cleared the pine trees off the site of the two Fort Mitchell sites. They have also maintained the two cemeteries, and have built a drive through with interpretive signs. The Creek Indian Factory Site, the Indian Agency Site and the Crowell Tavern Site, are intact in areas away from the interpreted area of the fort. There is a little evidence of vandalism or pothunting activities on the Fort Mitchell site area.

8. Significance

1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture architecture art commerce communications	community planning conservation economics	landscape architecture law literature X military music philosophy x politics/government	e religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1813-1840	Builder/Architect		

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Fort Mitchell site commemorates the determined efforts of the United States government to enforce its Indian Removal policy and enhance the virtues of Manifest Destiny. It also symbolizes the conflict between States' Rights and Federal Authority that was later resolved by the Civil War.

Indian Removal Policy

Following the American Revolution, white settlers moved rapidly into the territory beyond the Appalachians, bringing on two decades of white-Indian warfare. In Tennessee and Alabama the Creeks were pacified only by a series of intensive militia raids. Presidents Washington, Adams, and Jefferson all made serious attempts to regularize Indian relations by establishing trade, protecting Indian treaties and lands, and persuading tribes to take up agriculture and stock raising. But their efforts failed because the federal government was unable or unwilling to check the frontiersman's lust for land. The government's inability to control the frontiersman and to change the Indians' ways of living persuaded Jefferson to begin removing some of the eastern tribes to lands west of the Mississippi. This subject was introduced to Congress in 1803, and the 1804 act organizing the Louisiana territory included a provision for the exchange of Indian lands. The drive for removal began soon afterwards.

With the election of Andrew Jackson, the President took on the attitude that negotiating with Indian tribes as independent nations was an absurdity. Jackson favored total Indian removal from the eastern side of the Mississippi and persuaded Congress to pass the Removal Bill of 1830.

The Federal government's Indian policy reflected the strongly felt conviction that the United States was destined to control the American continent. This belief, called Manifest Destiny, was used to justify the extension of American sovereignty as far west as the Pacific. The Indians were regarded as an impediment to this process and therefore removed.

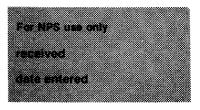
States' Rights

Conflict between state and national interests had been a source of political and constitutional controversy since 1790 when Virginia launched the attack upon Hamilton's Assumption Plan. Champions of state interests had indignantly denounced federal encroachments upon state autonomy, and had even declared that the states were sovereignties whose constitutional rights were equal or superior to those of the national government. Georgia's defiance of the United States on the Indian question was inspired by her desire to remove the

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remaining Creek and Cherokee Indians from the western part of the state. the course of the controversy Georgia openly flouted the authority of federal

treaties governing Indian status and even threatened to use force against U.S. troops, if that proved necessary to defend State interests. Georgia's conduct in the Indian question constituted an ominous precedent for state

nullification of federal authority.

Background

Fort Mitchell was occupied almost continually by soldiers from 1825 through Its original purpose - to keep peace between white settlers and the Indians - ceased to exist after 1836 when the Creek Indians were removed to Kansas and Oklahoma. In the early 1800's, all overland traffic from Georgia crossed the Chattahoochee at this point. The impact of this travel and the accompanying settlements were significant sources of conflict between Indians and whites. During the years 1809 -1811, continued unresolved problems concerning travel through Indian lands lead to a full-fledged Creek Indian The war provided an excuse for a major military campaign against the Upper Creeks by American forces. Fort Mitchell was established as a military depot for actions against the Upper Creeks. It remained a supply point and staging area during several advances into hostile Upper Creek territory.

In 1824, the Creek National Council met at Broken Arrow north of Fort Mitchell with Duncan Campbell and David Merriweather. They had been commissioned by President James Monroe to attempt to secure the last of the Lower Creek territory within the 1802 chartered limits of Georgia. Many of the Creeks were against land cessions and no treaty was signed during the long deliberations at Broken Arrow.

By 1832, it had become clear that the Creeks were losing the battle to keep The Treaty of Fort Jackson separated them from their former their land. neighbors, the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole. The Cherokee were being dispossessed by Georgia's land lottery. Passage by Congress of the Removal Act and the repudiation by the Jackson Administration of the Supreme Court decision accelerated the eventual outcome. Creek delegations had journeyed to Washington to plead for some redress of grievances. Washington's reply was that escape lay only in the abandonment of their land. In March of 1832, the Creek delegates signed the Treaty of Washington. By the terms of the treaty, the Creeks ceded to the United States all of its remaining land east of the Mississippi; the Creeks would receive 2,000,000 acres to be alloted in plantation or farm size plots to chiefs and heads of family. In reality the treaty of Washington resulted in the transfer of title to the United States for which the Creeks received nothing in return. Within months of the signing of the treaty, thousands of the Creeks had been driven from their homes to becoming starving refugees in adjacent forests and swamps.

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By the end of 1832, the Jackson Administration closed down the agency at Fort Mitchell in an attempt to encourage Indian emigration. Despite the pressures put upon them, many Indians continued to resist officials who advocated removal. The years 1833 to 1835 were marked by increasing incidents of fraud, theft, and murder. In 1833 a postmaster, Hardeman Owens, was accused of cheating the Indians and wrongfully taking their lands. Deputy Marshal Jeremiah Austil ordered Owens to leave the Indian Nation and when the settler refused, Austil used force. Troops were called out from Fort Mitchell and Owens was killed while resisting arrest. Alabama citizens were infuriated and demanded soldiers at the fort be tried for murder. The commanding officer, Major McIntosh, refused to turn his men over. President Jackson sent the aging jurist, Francis Scott Key, to negotiate a settlement. The soldiers were never tried and the man who actually killed Owens deserted. The death of Hardeman Owens at the hands of federal troops resulted in increased anti-Indian sentiment.

Incidents of hostile activities between Creeks and whites increased during 1835, and various local militia units were formed during the spring and summer of that year. Continued oppression and deprivation brought retaliation by some Creeks, particularly those of the Lower Creek towns along the Chattahoochee. The Macon, Georgia Messenger of February 4, 1836, in fact reported that "there has been considerable excitement for a week or two past at Columbus, and in the vicinity, from apprehension of hostile intentions on the part of the Indians of that neighborhood." By the 14th of April, the same paper further stated "the Creek Indians, below Columbus, are said to be almost without provisions, and in a sullen, discontented mood," and on May 12th, the Messenger reported "a war has already been commenced, and a number of citizens killed. The Creek Indians, below the Federal Road, are all in arms and killing every white person they have fallen in with." Other local newspapers quoted a letter from Crowell stating "four persons have been killed and many negroes taken off within a few days," and that hostile Indians had "assembled in the swamp near the Federal Road to attack any troops that might march into the Nation."

General Winfield Scott, with Major General Thomas S. Jesup as his second in command, arrived in Columbus during May to direct the second Creek War. Militia units from Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee were organized, and along with regular troops and friendly Creeks created an imposing military force. During part of this time, General Scott employed Fort Mitchell as the Headquarters of the Army of the South, and various military units were stationed within the reservation. At least five companies of Marines were stationed below Fort Mitchell at Camp Henderson, and during July of 1836, at least 400 Marines were briefly located at the fort itself. The American military had three objectives: (1) to suppress hostilities in the Creek country, (2) to obtain an unconditional submission by the Creeks, and (3) to collect, disarm and remove to the west all those Indians remaining within the Creek country.

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The war was brief and swift. Hostile Creeks burned several settlements and destroyed rural houses, taverns, bridges, and at least two steamboats. Few actual battles were fought, and many of the hostiles seemed intent on only minor destruction as they left the region to join Seminole and Creek groups in Florida. Within only a few months the war was over. Many captured Creeks were imprisoned at Fort Mitchell, and the reservation served as one of the major concentration points for the Creek Indian removal. Jacob Motte, an Army Surgeon during the Creek War of 1836, described one situation when

a party of five hundred who had been take captive, and brought to Fort Mitchell, were necessarily sent off in chains. The men were handcuffed two together, and a long chain passing between the double file connected them all together....The women followed drowned in tears....The smaller ones were comfortably disposed of in waggons, which followed in the rear.

Such scenes were repeated at Fort Mitchell throughout the following year. By 1838 Indian removal was completed, and in June of that year the property was "restored to the jurisdiction of the general land office to be disposed of according to law" (Letter dated 26 June 1838, from T. Cross, Acting Q. M. General to J. K. Poinsett, Secretary of War). A small military garrison was maintained at the post until the summer of 1840 when the property was finally turned over to private purchasers.

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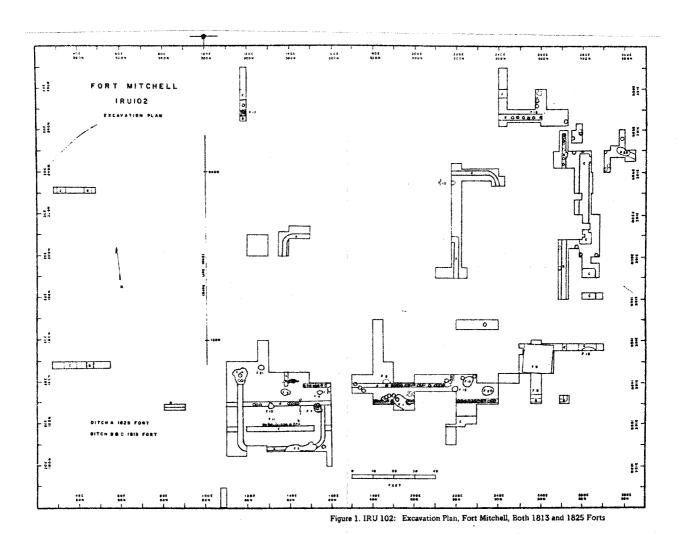
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Morgan, Robert T., The Cantley Plantation and Fort Mitchell, Auburn University. Auburn, Alabama, 1983.

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Figure 1. Site excavation plan of the Fort Mitchell Site (From Chase 1974:33-34).



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Figure 2. Overview of the Fort Mitchell Site, showing the placement of the 1825 fort within the outline of the 1813 fort (From Chase 1974:45).

